RESEARCH PLAN PROPOSAL

COMMUNITY RADIO AS AN INSTRUMENT OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

(An evaluative study with special reference to Radio Banasthali)

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INTRODUCTION:

Growth of any country is adjudged by the strength of its communication system. Stronger the communication system, greater the rate of growth.

India is a country with utmost diversities in terms of geographical distribution, culture, caste, religion, language and beliefs. With these major areas of diversities, there are thousands of minor varieties of sub caste, languages and dialects.

In such a country, we are still following a single and conventional broadcasting system for a huge population of a 1000 million. The information and entertainment needs of these many people have been tried to be fulfilled with only two broadcasters; All India Radio and Doordarshan with as many as 15 channels since long and now with hundreds of private broadcasters who do not cater the public needs of information as well as entertainment but their own business interests which is very much obvious also. All these media are working on the notion of Broadcasting which covers wide geographical area as well as large population at a one given time.

This situation demanded some change in the scenario and hence as an alternative medium, the concept of Narrowcasting has been evolved which actually works with a focus on the needs of the community of a specific area. The term narrowcasting refers to cast different programmes for a narrow area and a definite population.

Community media are the means of application of the concept of narrowcasting. Community media are popular and strategic interventions into contemporary media culture where the democratization of media structures, forms and practices is required. Popular in that these initiatives are responses to the felt need of local populations to create media systems that are relevant to their everyday lives; strategic in that these efforts are powerful assertions of collective identity and local autonomy in the era marked the extraordinary concentration of media ownership on the local and national levels.

Community Radio is a medium which is defined as a radio for the local Community and by the Community itself.

Invent of Community Radio in India was assured with a landmark judgement of Supreme Court delivered by Justice P.B. Sawant and Justice S. Mohan on February 9,1995 in the case between the *Union of India & Cricket Association of Bengal.* This decision stated that the airwaves or frequencies are a public property and have to be controlled and regulated by public authority in the interests of the public further upheld the right of the citizens. While the 'public property theory' could make the task of democratization of Community Radio very easy, coming as it does from the highest court in the country.

But the decision has raised some questions which are contemporary in our line of research. It did not explain the ambiguities which exists in the system-

Why is 'spectrum' an exclusive property of the government?

How are airwaves public properties in a framework where the government has the right to auction, rent, buy or sell frequencies?

Isn't the community the 'owner' of its station?

Does the government have a total right over the entire spectrum or is it a limited right?

These questions yet to be answered but Community Radio is considered as a medium which is participatory, democratic, non- commercial in nature. The power of community radio lies in its participatory nature, as both its content and technology are people-oriented. Community narrowcasting provides news, information, cultural content and entertainment to communities defined by geographical location or common interest. The diversity of programme content available through community narrowcasting, broadens the media choices available to listeners and customers.

Community Radio : Community Radio, a truly people's radio, perceives listeners not only consumers but also as active citizens and creative producers of media content.

Development : refers to a process involves not only changes in the economic structure, but is interlinked with the entire social, political and cultural fabric of

society. It involves a number of qualitative changes which leads to the upward movement of the entire social system.

Development Communication : refers to the uses to the communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfilment of the human potential.

Instrument : refers to tool or thing used in performing action.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting encourages setting up of the Community Radio Stations as it provides an opportunity to the local communities to get involved in various development works.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Prof. S. K. Waghmare(1992) examines the use of radio as an education tool in the classrooms of USA, says that absence of suitable radio programmes is a real problem at the present. Many teachers who are anxious to use the radio in the classroom do not find any suitable programs during school sessions. He finds that most of the programmes were broadcasted in the evening when radio has its largest group of listeners. He concludes his findings in three steps of making appropriate use of radio in education.

These are 1) the way to get ready. 2) the physical aspects of the classroom, and 3) procedure of teaching the radio lesson. Prof. Waghmare says that if radio is used adequately, it can be a very functional medium can be used for the purpose of education. He emphasizes on its unique features of portability, intimacy and interactivity.

The study of Prof. Waghmare is using conventional public broadcaster radio. It is not dealing with the community media and not including community participation in the programming.

Raja Pokharapurkar(1993) in his book 'Rural Development Through Community Television'1993, analyses the factors influencing TV communication for rural development through community viewing. He conducted his research in three districts of Maharashtra state- Pune, Satara and Nagar and concluded that for rural areas, community TV bridges the gap between the 'media haves' and 'media have nots'. Major conclusions give a positive contribution in the areas of 'viewing habit' rural viewers preferences in terms of content and suitability of timing. The findings are definitely a contribution to the knowledge on TV communication in India.

The study gives valuable inputs for media planning as well as understanding the real power of TV for rural communication and development.

The study is confined to the programming pattern which is designed by the experts. There is no contribution of community in the programming

where community media involves the programming for the community and by the community.

Kelvin Howley(2005) opines in his book 'community media- people, places, and communication technologies' that the community media is grassroots or locally oriented media. Its access initiatives predicted on a sense of dissatisfaction with mainstream media form and content. Community media is dedicated to the principles of free expression and participatory democracy, and committed to enhancing community relations and promoting community harmony. He argues that community media represent an important site to illuminate the interpenetrations of local, regional and national cultures within and through communication technologies. He states that the community media provide a resource for a host of social, political and environment movements to local awareness of these pressing issues and is a vehicle to link these local issues with global concerns.

The book incorporate case studies of various community media but there is no place for the opinion of the target community.

Dr. K. John Babu (2010) opines that the radio lessons enhance the knowledge of the students and are also useful to the teachers. He suggests that the use of radio programmes in classrooms may not only help the teachers in multi-grade teaching to use supplementary devices for their better professional growth but also help the students to enrich the mental horizon in respect of cognitive growth and provide an adequate inspiration.

Dr. Babu recommends that issues other than primary education may be taken up for further research, hence the proposed research aims to evaluate other developmental issues like health, agricultural practices and sanitation and proposed study is confined to the area covered by one community radio station.

The above study is an experimental study whereas the proposed study aims to evaluate a community radio working for more than five years for the target community.

According to **Gopal Krishan Rao(2010)** community radio is expected to focus on issues related to education, health, environment, agriculture,

rural and community development. Cable community radio station as Namma Dhwani or our voices , was set up earlier in Boodikote, Karnataka. The villagers believe that this radio station is ours because it speaks about us-in our language and in our accent. G.K. Rao opines that community radio is a new source of strength for poor people. It addresses their most basic development needs.

The study is not supported by collected data. It is based on personal observations of the author whereas the proposed study is trying to establish the role of community radio with sufficient data and data analysis.

Kanchan Kumar(2005) discusses types of research strategies used to analyse how community radio is being used (and hailed) as a medium for articulating more people-centred development needs and establishing decentralized public spaces for dialogue and collaborative action in India and around the world. The paper presents a basis for evaluating community radio initiatives by sketching approaches for engaging with the stakeholders in this sphere and through the responses of collaborators and participants in these projects.

Saima Saeed(2007) opines that sustainability of community radio is a huge issue. Radio Jamia is a case in point. Increasing program time from the current 90 minutes per day would mean increased expenditure. This despite the fact that since Radio Jamia went on air each student in the university is required to pay an annual fee of Rs 50/- for the same. CR policy has to be re-considered to addresses this very important concern.

The paper discusses about the problems in financial viability of a community radio station but it does not provide any suggestion to make it self-sustainable.

Kitty van vuuren(2006) throws light on the troubles that arise during fieldwork conducted at a community radio station, the unexpected events forced a reformulation of the research question, and this eventually led to an improved theoretical insight.

Study of Kitty reveals the new ideas about field research at a community radio. It provides an insight to be flexible and reformulate the research questions.

Steve Buckley(2006) analyses poverty , freedom of expression, the role of community media and The development impact of community media.

He recommends that there should be clear and explicit recognition of community broadcasting as a distinct sector. According to him community broadcasting should not be run for profit but for social gain and community benefit; it should be owned by and accountable to the community that it seeks to serve; and it should provide for participation by the community in programme making and in management. There should be a straightforward and transparent process for the allocation of spectrum and the licensing of community broadcasting. It should be responsive to demand from community-based organizations that meet the essential characteristics; there should be no unnecessary obstacles that would exclude or deter communities from seeking authorization; and the process should be independent of political interference.

Buckley suggests participation of community in the programming and transparency in the licensing of community broadcasting. It is therefore a matter to find out whether we are in India are actually following the suggested practices or not.

Nitya Jecob(2007) opines that being a simple and cheap means of communication, community radio empowers communities. He emphasizes on participatory programming and tries to establish community radio as a medium for the marginalized. Nitya gives examples of CR stations like Mandakini ki Awaz, Garhwal hills of Uttrakhand started in 2001, Henwal Vani from Chamba where community reporters interviews villagers, compose songs and stage skits for radio programmes.

Nitya gives examples of certain radio stations but the observations do not have statistical support. The proposed study is trying to give figurative support to such observations.

According to **Muralidharan(2007)** community broadcasting is an extremely useful device in providing voice to the local community in managing their affairs and participating in overall development process.

Dorothy Kidd(1999) describes a relationship between alternative and community media, which captures the dynamics of

locally oriented, participatory media organizations. Kidd's simple definition parses out the phrase "alternative" in a fashion that crystallizes our understanding of community based media, alternative media are predicted on altering or changing prevailing media systems and the broader socio- cultural environment. The emphasis on critical intervention and social change is paramount. Kidd's says that alternative media is " of, by and for" people living in a specific place.

Dorothy explains the term 'alternative media' and the proposed study is trying to find out the application of alternative media.

Frank krishner(1998) is of the opinion that community media should be to serve the interests and aspirations of the community. The people should be reached where they are. The intention is to promote human development consciously at whatever level of education development, interest of understanding thecommunity is currently at- so that people may learn to diagnose their own problems and clarify their objectives.

Birowo(2009) opines that in chaotic and uncertain situations related to natural disaster, information is important for people to understand their recent situation. This paper describes the role of community radio in its community, especially before, during, and after natural disaster in Indonesia.

Birowo observes one advantage of community radios in aceh after tsunami in 2004, that it could voice the interests of affected people. The radios were staffed by volunteer locals so it could interact directly with community members. According to Birowo community radio can function as media for people's awareness about disaster risk management. With continuation of exposure, people will be aware about their situation, including the potential hazards from their environment. In this context, the greater the exposure to disasters, the greater the interest in disaster management.

Birowo finds community radio very useful in Indonesia, it would be interesting to whather community radio is equally useful at India specially at Rajasthan where diversities are prominent.

Pavarala and Malik(2007) discusses about the initial struggle which was over with the supreme court decision in 1995 to declare airwaves public property. They talks about the process of de-monopolization of airwaves, the campaign for community radio in India and community radio guidelines came in 2006.

The authors describe the civic society initiatives in rural India including *Namma Dhwani* (our voice) in 2001 at Boodikote village in the Kolar district of Karnataka, *Ujjas radio at Kutch, Gujrat and Henval Vaani* and *Mandakini ki Awaaz* set up in the state of Uttarakhand.

The authors discusses de-monopolization of air waves but not talking about very important issue of sustainability of community run radio stations.

Hans J. Kleinsteuber(2006) states that community radio in Germany is clearly under developed. He finds, it is astonishing as the country, being located in the center of Europe, is surrounded by countries with a lively radio landscape, Denmark with its network of near radios, the Netherlands with municipal radio, Belgium and France with a tradition of free radio, Switzerland with a governmental strategy to introduce non-commercial radio.

According to Kleinsteuber the basic reason is the strong tradition that makes it very difficult for the political elite to think of radio media being controlled by ordinary citizens - or even worse: movements on the left, rebellious students or migrants.

Kleinsteuber's study reveals that political interests and low thinking about ordinary citizens are major obstacles in the liberalization of policies of broadcasting which may be one of the reasons for not giving permission of news broadcast on community radio in India.

Bazlur Rahman(2010) gives an account of status of community radio in Bangladesh as it has made its beginning in December 2010. He opines that the broadcasting of CR is going to bring about a qualitative change in the broadcast policies of the country. Introducing community broadcasting will be a significant step towards decentralizing the media system in Bagladesh. CR will not be able to get into the competitions of

media market immediately, but it will no doubt, add values to the plurality and diversity in a democratic media environment.

Snehasis Sur (2009) opines that in the technological side propositions have come to integrate CRS with Community media Centre (CMC), which combines traditional local media, radio, TV and newspaper with new technologies such as computers, internet and other digital devices. CMC is a unique way for poor communities, often in remote rural areas to overcome common obstacles to their full and profitable use of ICT. The possibility of connecting CRSs through cable is also a concept, which can be thought of.

He says that the need of the hour is to create awareness, motivate communities and facilitate CRSs to begin. The time has come to launch a movement to make a successful Community Radio in India.

Maraa(2008) states in his article that in the corrupt, Naxalite and drought prone areas of Palamau, Jharkhand, aid-an NGO is setting up Vikalp community radio station, the first one to go on air in the state. Vikalp, which means alternative, truly looks at providing people with alternatives.He says that the area is notorious for drought, dacoity, and an almost complete power breakdown, meral block in Garhwa perhaps is a great place for a community radio station to exist.

Maraa opines that Vikalp is one of the most promising community radio stations in India. With the emphasis being on exactly the issues which concern the community, and having a fantastic community base, it is going to be an exciting time, a time to prove to the government and all the other doubting that community radio can indeed be a legitimate tool to involve communities to address their own problems and speak about their own lives.

A study done by **Dr P Govindaraju**,**M Kalavathy(2008),** found during their study Holy Cross Community Radio, Trichy, Tamil Nadu, India that the most of the respondents, opine that Holy Cross community radio initiative has fostered local participation and awareness generation. 44% of them accepted that the radio programmes created awareness on epidemics and child health care in their area, 22% of them agreed that the radio

programmes created awareness on AIDS/Cancer. Results of the survey and fall out of the discussion also reveal that some people living in the two communities of Jeevanagar and Dharmanathapuram slum areas face resource constraints that debar them from engaging themselves in any form of community initiatives whatsoever.

The above mentioned study finds community radio useful in creating awareness in the the target community but it overlooks an important aspect of community radio i.e. participation of community in the programming. The proposed study aims to study the contribution of target audience in the patterns of programming.

The review of literature provides a guideline to researcher that the studies conducted earlier are revealing the importance of community radio in a target area development but neglecting the participation of community and financial viability of a CR station. Apart from these important aspects it is interesting to note that no study has been conducted about the role of community radio in Rajasthan.

MOTIVATION/JUSTIFICATION AND RELEVANCE:

Community Radio has been accepted now as a major tool for decentralization of Mass Media in India and whole of the world. It is a medium for the people, by the people and of the people. Community Radio can be used as a tool to break monopolies in the field of broadcasting and converting the phenomenon of broadcasting into narrowcasting.

It would be useful to know that whether community radio is successful as an instrument of narrowcasting?

Community radio is a type of radio service that caters to the interests of a certain area, broadcasting content that is popular to a local audience but which may often be overlooked by commercial or mass-media broadcasters.

It has been more than five years since community radio entered in Rajasthan. It was launched at two different places in the year 2005 as a new initiative. . In the initial phases of establishment, Banasthali and FM 7 Community Radio were available on 90.4 MHz frequency and the channel had three hours of transmission (including repeat transmission) a day which has now been extended to six hours.. They covered around ten kilometers of their respective transmission centers. The target audience of Banasthali community radio is the rural population of 50 villages around Banasthali Vidyapeeth. Village youth volunteers (VYV) from Niwai block have been associated with community radio project since its inception. Around 100 VYVs were given training in how to assess community needs for audience preferences on radio programmes. where as the target audience of FM radio7 is the student community from school to university level. Programming of the channel involves a great amount of active participation of students of India International School, International College for girls and Gurukul.

It is therefore justified to study the functioning of community radio in Rajasthan and see up to what extent these stations are able to design their programming to cater the requirements of their respective target community. This study is an attempt to evaluate whether the community radio stations at Rajasthan are fulfilling the information needs of the target audience.

To analyze how community radio is being used (and hailed) as a medium for articulating more people-centered development needs and establishing decentralized public spaces for dialogue and collaborative action in Rajasthan

and How it is related to the rest of the world. This study is being done to present a basis for evaluating community radio initiatives by sketching approaches for engaging with the stakeholders in this sphere and through the responses of collaborators and participants in these projects.

OBJECTIVES :

1) To identify the information needs of the area taken under study.
2) To analyse the role of Community Radio in the area.
3) To assess the role of Community Radio to give voice to underprivileged section of society and ensuring right of freedom of expression for last man of our society.
4) To study the financial sustainability of Community Radio.
5) To compare the awareness level of the area of almost same demographic profile without having any community radio with the area having community radio.
6) To review the accessibility of the radio station among the target audience.

HYPOTHESIS :

1) Community Radio can play a vital role in the development of state like Rajasthan.
2) Community Radio can be a part of developmental schemes of Government.
3) Community itself can take up the responsibility of its own radio station in terms of production of programmes and financial viability.
4) Villages and communities having community radio are aware about health, sanitation and agricultural issues in comparison to other ones.

PLAN OF WORK AND METHODOLOGY :

The research design is as follows:

(A) Area, Universe and Sample

The selection of area for the purpose of study are villages like Banasthali, Niwai rural, Palai, Sunara. These have been selected keeping in mind the fact that the village are in the coverage area of Radio Banasthali. The beneficiaries of the programmes broadcasted from the this community radio are available in the village.

Three villages of almost same demographic profile will also be selected which are out of coverage area of radio Banasthali.

The universe include the whole population of these villages.

Since the study area is vast, sampling method will be adopted for making estimates about the characteristics of the universe. In the proposed study random sampling method will be used.

Minimum 500 respondents will be taken for the study. 250 respondents will be taken from the area with community radio and 250 will be from community radio without area.

Apart from collecting data through schedule, unstructured interviews of Government officials some elected representatives and will be taken.

(B) Tools of the study:

The following tools will be used for the purpose of the study :

(i) **Schedule:** For the purpose of collecting first hand information and facilitating comparison of data, a schedule will be prepared. This schedule will be used to securing the information from the respondents.

(ii) **Unstructured interview:** Due to qualitative nature of the study , it is assumed that besides the questions included in the schedule, certain

supplementary questions will be needed to be asked. Hence an unstructured interview will also be conducted on the respondents.

(iii) **Observation :** To enable the investigations to view and verify personally the indicators and life style of the respondents, observations will be undertaken.

(iv) **Case study :** In depth case study of Radio Banasthali will be done to examine legal, technical and economic obstacles faced by the radio station. It will enable researcher to know about institutional philosophy and programming style to various radio practices to serve the target community at Niwai district.

(v) **Secondary Sources :** These sources help in providing certain information which may be difficult to obtain otherwise. Besides these sources also help in supplementing the information obtained through primary sources as well as providing guideline to the investigator.

DATA ANALYSIS TOOLS:

After collecting the data a descriptive analysis will be done which will be followed by the appropriate statistical analysis.
Statistical analysis will include tabulation of data and representation of data using graphs and charts for diagrammatic representation of data.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY :

1) Limitation of time, space and manpower are the most restrictive aspects in an empirical study and this study may also be limited due to these aspects.

2) The answers of the respondents, as such will have to be taken as true.

3) The respondents may be quite on certain issues and as such certain inferences will have to be drawn on the basis of observation of the overt behaviour of the respondents which may include gestures and facial expressions.

4) The conclusions drawn may not be universal.

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